

## **MotoGP Safety Concerns**

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An Open Letter From A Collective Of Fans To Liberty Media, MGP Sports Entertainment Group, FIM And IRTA Regarding Rider Safety Concerns Within The MotoGP And The Related Moto2 And Moto3 World Championships Following The 2026: Monster Energy Grand Prix of Catalunya

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## **1. FOREWORD**

Dear Liberty Media, MGP Sports Entertainment Group, FIM and IRTA (later referred to as the Organization),

It has come to many peoples' attention that the safety protocols in the FIM Grand Prix World Championship Regulation<sup>[1]</sup> do not sufficiently protect riders, and, in areas where they might be comprehensive, they are disregarded entirely.

In this document we hope to bring our concerns as a collective of fans to your attention, and also explain a few proposals, the implementation of which we believe will increase trust in the Organization and help protect the riders - without which there would be no MotoGP.

We plead with you to read through the entire document and consider our points and reasoning.

We, as fans, do not mean to insult the Organization and their rules in any way, shape, or form. We merely want to express our concerns and come with proposals for potential changes in the future, so the riders can keep riding safely and we can all continue to enjoy MotoGP.

This document was created in collaboration with multiple concerned fans.

## 2. CATALAN GP 2026

### 2.1 FIM Concussion Guidelines Concerns

In the 2026 Monster Energy Grand Prix of Catalunya (later referred to as "Catalan GP") there has been clear disregard of the recently implemented FIM Concussion Guidelines.

The official FIM Concussion Guidelines<sup>[2]</sup> (later referred to as "the concussion guidelines" or "the guidelines") state "if in doubt, sit them out". The guidelines state that *"any rider suspected of having concussion should be removed from riding until they have been evaluated."* Another relevant rule states that: *"FIM Concussion Guidelines are activated the moment the nature of the injury/illness is identified on the Injury Report Form as concussion, irrespective of the severity of the concussion or if it is considered a suspected concussion. Any reported concussion is therefore required to follow the FIM Return to Sport Framework."*

We were pleased to see that MotoGP had belatedly brought in a concussion protocol, and it seemed sufficient. However, the problem arises when these guidelines are not followed, thereby risking the health of all riders on track and diminishing fans' trust in the Organization's actual willingness to improve on rider safety.

Jorge Martín crashed on Friday 15th May 2026 in Free Practice 1 (FP1). Following this crash he was assessed by Dr Ángel Charte\*, MotoGP's medical chief, who confirmed that Martín had suffered a mild concussion.

As an aside issue, there does not seem to be an official Injury Report involving Martín's concussion. If the CMO has publicly said that Martín suffered concussion, there should also be an Injury Report concerning said injury. The lack of one raises concerns regarding media transparency regarding riders' health, and regarding transparency within the Organization itself, as well as further concerns over a potential failure to follow protocol.

Dr Ángel Charte later spoke more on the matter, saying "The rider is fine. After the crash he was slightly concussed at first and had a bruise on his left forearm. But now, after medication, he's fine. I'll check on him before he goes out for practice"<sup>[3]</sup> \*\*. This is a blatant disregard of the new guidelines. A rider, no matter the severity of the concussion, is *not* fine and should not have been cleared to ride according to MotoGP's own regulations.

Adding to this, Dr Charte is a medical professional trusted to speak carefully and accurately when dealing with serious topics like rider health. He should not have spoken so casually on the matter. By speaking in this manner, Dr Charte created potential confusion regarding differing interpretations of his words. This may then have resulted in less stringent implementation of the guidelines, risking rider health and safety.

Furthermore, the rules on pages 13 and 16 of the guidelines state: *"Relative rest and reduced screen time are encouraged for the first 48 hours."* and *"No competitor*

*diagnosed with concussion may return to racing without clearance by a medical practitioner AFTER completing a Return-to-Sport program. From the perspective of brain development, an adult is considered to be 18 years and older.*

- *The mandatory minimum period of exclusion is 10 days from diagnosis, including the day of the incident.*
- *Permitted to return to sport on the 11th day."*

Clearly these have been ignored.

First of all, Martín continued to partake in the weekend as normal. Circuit racing is a very intensive sport and certainly cannot be considered relative rest. Medical guidance from the NHS states that it can take up to 48 hours for symptoms of concussion to appear and that when they do arise, symptoms can be ongoing for two weeks. Concussion can cause confusion, loss of balance, issues with sight, nausea, as well as irritability which Martín clearly displayed on his return to the box following the Grand Prix. The recommended return to both sport and normal life is only after 21 days.

Secondly, Dr Charte may have said that Martín was fit to ride<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, but Martín had not yet completed a Return-to-Sport program which is stated to be mandatory by MotoGP's own regulations.<sup>[1]</sup> Regardless of Dr Charte's words, Martín still should not have been allowed to go out on track, putting not only himself at further risk, for example of Secondary Impact Syndrome, but also putting other riders on track further at risk as he would have had reduced decision-making ability and would have been less able to race safely.

Lastly, since Martín is 28 years of age he is an adult and should have been excluded from racing for at least 10 days. This is clearly stated in the guidelines quoted above.<sup>[1]</sup>

In the Catalan Test after the race weekend, Martín crashed for a sixth time, and was subsequently hospitalized. This could have been avoided by following the established regulations and not allowing concussed riders to race.

All these rules have been blatantly ignored, and allowing Martín to continue riding caused unnecessary harm to himself and the other riders, both physically and psychologically. MotoGP has failed to protect its own riders according to its own regulations and in doing so could have caused irreversible injury or worse.

<sup>\*</sup>, <sup>\*\*</sup> This article was written by a second-hand source, which may result in inaccurate or false claims.<sup>[3]</sup> However, the official MotoGP account on X had posted a video of Jorge Martín walking out of his motorhome, followed by Dr Ángel Charte<sup>[4]</sup>, which is cause to believe these sources are not mistaken.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> (see <sup>[3]</sup>)

## 2.2 Race Restarts and Medical Checks

Following the incident in the Catalan GP between Álex Márquez and Pedro Acosta, multiple riders could be seen clutching their hands, putting ice on their hands or checking out their legs/feet (in order; Fabio Di Giannantonio, Francesco Bagnaia and Johann Zarco<sup>[5]</sup>). Other riders were visibly distraught.

Fabio Di Giannantonio was clutching his hand because he had ridden over Álex Márquez's front tyre, causing him to crash and injure his hand. After getting back to his pit box, he (along with several other riders) was allowed to restart again without any medical checks.

Furthermore, following the race Di Giannantonio was not able to take off his glove, suggesting that his hand was too injured or swollen to safely remove it. Later on the podium he noticeably avoided putting any weight on his injured hand. Di Giannantonio's team (VR46 Racing Team) also made it known that he would not be participating in the Catalan Test.<sup>[6]</sup> If a rider is too injured to be riding in the test the day after the event\*, then they should not have been riding in either of the restarts\*\*.

Besides Fabio Di Giannantonio, other riders were injured as well. As previously stated, Francesco Bagnaia and Johann Zarco were seen on-screen with their injuries.<sup>[5]</sup> Neither of these riders (nor any other riders, excluding Álex Márquez) were required to undergo medical checks to see if they were fit to race. This is extremely negligent. Potentially injured riders should not be allowed to compete in a restart without having passed medical checks. Allowing them to compete while injured could lead to dangerous manoeuvres, worsened injuries, and additional crashes. This is a complete failure to protect the riders and mitigate the increased risk of harm.

\*, \*\* The Catalan GP, Race 1 and Race 2

## 2.3 After the Finish

After Race 2 had concluded, multiple riders were open about not being 100% fit. They told media that it was not easy to come back out again<sup>[7]</sup> and stated that the second restart was not needed.<sup>[8], [9], [10], [11], [12]</sup> Furthermore, at no point were riders consulted over whether they felt they wanted to, or even could, continue racing.<sup>[13]</sup>

Other riders such as Bagnaia reported feeling dizzy while on the bike<sup>[14]</sup> while Marini said that the crash involving himself, Bagnaia, and Zarco caused him to have a bad gut feeling and flashbacks to his crash in 2025 in Suzuka.<sup>[15]</sup> The riders were not in either the right mental or physical state to be on track. MotoGP is a dangerous sport, but it is made far more dangerous when riders are not mentally and physically capable of performing at their best.

Johann Zarco told L'Équipe that he should not have restarted in an article titled '*«Je hurle de douleur ma jambe commence à brûler» rapatrié en france Johann Zarco raconte son accident au gp de catalogne*' or '*“I screamed in pain, my leg started to*

*burn” Johann Zarco recounts his accident at the Catalan GP”.<sup>[16]</sup> After witnessing the incident involving Álex Márquez and making contact with debris, Zarco was in no fit state to ride, as he stated in the article: “I avoided the biggest pieces [during Alex’s crash], but I still hit some debris with my left foot. When I pulled into the pits, it hurt like hell. I took off my boot and helmet, and **my foot was already purple**. We put ice on the bruise and the pain subsided a bit. **That’s when I should have decided to pull out**. Between the images of Alex’s crash and that blow to my foot, it really brought me down. I wasn’t in the zone anymore when we lined up on the grid”.*

This was then unfortunately evidenced by his own crash after the first restart where he was involved in a 3 rider accident at turn 1. If MotoGP is indeed the highest and most competitive level of motorcycle circuit racing, the fact that such an incident occurred belies the compromised state of those involved. How then, *another* restart was allowed to occur following this is shocking. If all riders in the proximity of the original crash had their mental and physical wellbeing assessed, the second incident may have been avoided entirely.

Later reports by the media following Di Giannantonio’s withdrawal from the post-race test quote Di Giannantonio’s teammate Franco Morbidelli stating, with respect to how injured Di Giannantonio following his collision with debris, that Di Giannantonio was “screaming a lot from one start to the other so I thought he was in big pain”.<sup>[6], [8], [17]</sup>

To put it bluntly, this is bad press for your Organization. Appearing to push riders—who had just been in a crash and who had seen their colleagues injured and transported to the hospital—to go out and repeatedly compete does not look good. Not only is it more dangerous, it also appears unsympathetic and like the Organization is focused on spectacle over rider safety. Fans love the riders, they don’t care about how much money MotoGP makes. Fans on social media as well as friends and members of the press who attended the Catalan GP have disclosed their feelings of discomfort and horror at repeatedly watching injured riders restart.<sup>[18], [19], [20], [21], [22], [23]</sup> Despite it being a once in a lifetime experience to attend a MotoGP race live, they feel their experience was diminished by having to watch riders repeatedly restart in clearly unsafe conditions. This also appears to have been a common experience for those watching at home, as can be seen from many social media threads on the incident.

We love MotoGP. We hated watching that race.

In a video posted on X by the official TNT Sports account<sup>[9]</sup> Pedro Acosta stated: “The show is important, but we are the ones that make the show.” The riders are the show, the audience helps fund it, and, as is pointed out above, they will not continue to do so if riders are not cared for. If rider safety is disregarded, eventually there will be no more riders. There will be no more show.

### **3. SEPANG GP 2025**

#### **3.1 Overview**

On October 26th, 2025, the Petronas Grand Prix of Malaysia took place. In the Moto3 class a horrible crash involving José Antonio Rueda and Noah Dettwiler took place during the sighting lap. Dettwiler's motorcycle had a technical issue, which led to him being slow on the racing line. Rueda was riding behind him, and did not expect the sudden lack of speed from Dettwiler, which caused him to crash into the backside of Dettwiler's motorcycle and them both to be flung off of their motorcycles. A type of accident which mimicked the career-ending crashes of both Bubba Shobert in 1989 and Reinhold Roth in 1990 as well as the fatal accident at the 1983 British GP that killed both Norman Brown and Peter Huber.<sup>[24], [25]</sup>

In the case of the accident at the 2025 Malaysian Moto3 race both riders suffered great injuries and had to be airlifted to the hospital.

Additionally, the other riders on track witnessed their colleagues and friends suffer a traumatic crash and great injury. As was highlighted above in the section on the Catalan GP, they were unlikely to be in the correct headspace to race as safely as possible. They still had to go out. This is, again, presumably deeply unpleasant for the riders. Many of the riders in the lower classes are younger and more vulnerable. Forcing them to go out and race after witnessing such an event is cruel and unnecessary. Following the MotoGP race multiple riders voiced concerns with respect to how the situation was handled. Including; Franco Morbidelli, Francesco Bagnaia, Marco Bezzecchi, Joan Mir and Alex Rins.<sup>[26], [27], [28]</sup> In addition, fans find it uncomfortable, and again, it diminishes trust in the Organization's ability to keep riders safe and treat them well.

#### **3.2 Incorrect Graphics**

While the riders were being treated on the side of the track, graphics on-screen indicated that both riders were conscious at that time.<sup>[29]</sup> Later, this turned out to be completely false: both riders suffered a cardiac arrest(s).<sup>[30]</sup>

This destroys trust in the Organization and their ability to keep riders safe and the audience correctly informed. While we understand that the priority in these circumstances should always be the riders' wellbeing, it is counter-productive to lie about a rider's welfare. It also seems deeply cruel to families of injured riders to lie about their wellbeing when they are not conscious.

It also ruins any potential trust that would be placed in the Organization during further incidents. It was difficult to witness so many people speculating that riders were severely injured or worse during later crashes (such as those during the Catalan GP) because, as many online pointed out, a lot of people don't trust the Organization when they claim a rider is doing well anymore. By putting out incorrect information the Organization has destroyed its own credibility. This will only continue if the

Organization does not both make significant changes to its reporting, and issue an apology for this incident.

### **3.3 Moto2 and Moto3 Warm Up**

The Warm Up is a crucial session before a race. It allows the teams and riders to test the motorcycles that have been deconstructed and rebuilt following qualifying, especially if that motorcycle ended qualifying with a crash. Removing this session from the calendar means that the riders' first chance to test out their motorcycles is the next day on the sighting lap of the race.

Following this change many teams and riders have repurposed the sighting lap(s) into a mini Warm Up, meaning that the riders will be evaluating setup changes and checking for technical, mechanical, or electronic issues. In order to properly assess a motorcycle it needs to be ridden at high speed. Some teams and riders do still use the sighting lap for its intended use: getting to the grid, usually to save both fuel and tyre wear. However, this makes certain riders slower than others, further increasing the risk of speed discrepancies. This then increases the risk of serious crashes and injuries.

While yes, technical difficulties like the ones which impacted Dettwiler's motorcycle could have happened at any time, with a Warm Up, the riders could have taken their time with the sighting lap, and the crash may never have happened. While that is something we are unable to prove, we can say that removing the Warm Up session for these classes has not made the sport safer, and has potentially made riders less safe instead.

## **4. CIRCUIT SAFETY ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

### **4.1 Adelaide Circuit**

We are aware that MotoGP is planning on switching out the much beloved Phillip Island circuit for a street circuit in Adelaide, and that they are currently claiming this will be made safe for riders.<sup>[31], [32]</sup> However, many have voiced concerns regarding the lack of run-off space and excess walls all around the track, which greatly increase the likelihood of injury or death.<sup>[33], [34], [35], [36]</sup> Particularly considering that the proposed track in Adelaide is based on the historic F1 track, a track that has a history with respect to serious injuries following Mika Häkkinen's major accident on the circuit in 1995 during qualifying.<sup>[37], [38]</sup>

Furthermore, many fans are unlikely to trust MotoGP's assurances that any track will be made safe as previous incidents have suggested otherwise. Take, for example, the race at the Autódromo Internacional Ayrton Senna this year. There was a sinkhole in the track<sup>[39], [40]</sup> and, while there were claims the track had been safely mended by the time of the race, the race distance had to be shortened and many

riders reported both a concerning lack of grip and a disintegrating surface.<sup>[41]</sup> Riders such as Álex Rins and Álex Márquez showed injuries left by loose asphalt coming up and hitting them.<sup>[41], [42]</sup> Media reports indicate that the disintegrating surface of the Goiânia track has continued to be an issue beyond the MotoGP weekend. With the same issue impacting the stock car racing in May 2026, the first event held at the track following its closure to facilitate resurfacing and repairs following the MotoGP weekend.<sup>[43]</sup>

This is clear evidence of MotoGP and its affiliates failing to properly consider rider safety and potential conditions when making decisions regarding tracks. People are therefore unwilling to trust MotoGP when it comes to establishing new tracks safely.

## 4.2 Balaton Park

During the 2025 Michelin Grand Prix of Hungary (later referred to as the Hungarian GP) Enea Bastianini crashed in turn 13, sliding through the chicane and narrowly avoided being run over by other riders.<sup>[44], [45]</sup> Following his crash, Bastianini pushed for a change in the layout, which did not happen. Bastianini has expressed his frustration on this matter, saying “***I expected a different Balaton Park this year. Instead, everything will be the same,***” he said with remorse. “*What happened to me last year was extremely dangerous. That’s not a MotoGP-level chicane.*”<sup>[46], [47]</sup>

Also at this Grand Prix, Pedro Acosta lost control of his bike at turn eight, at which point the bike collided with a camera and narrowly missed the camera operator known as Joao.<sup>[45]</sup> Following this, criticism of the track was aimed at the lack of run off areas and reporter Simon Patterson suggested that the Organization showed no regard for rider safety, and that for fans to believe otherwise was ‘very naive’.<sup>[48], [49]</sup>

Given that both incidents sparked such controversy, and further incidents have occurred in other series including WSBK again sparking further controversy, the fact that the circuit continues to host races unchanged does little to disprove Patterson’s suggestion.<sup>[50]</sup>

At the beginning of May 2026 Mat Oxley then published an article in Motorsport Magazine focused on the ‘Dangerous Balaton Chicane’ that remains unfixed and as dangerous as ever. He then described the corner as having a ‘100% failure rate’ and lamenting the fact that ‘no one seems to be looking after [rider] interests.’<sup>[51]</sup>

## 4.3 Mandalika

The abrasive size and depth of the gravel at Mandalika was criticised by multiple riders including, Joan Mir, Luca Marini, Francesco Bagnaia, Alex Rins and Brad Binder and riders pushed for safety reviews and changes.<sup>[52], [53], [54], [55]</sup>

During the 2025 Pertamina Mandalika GP, riders Marco Bezzecchi and Marc Márquez collided, resulting in significant injury to both. Bezzecchi was unconscious for a period of time and M. Márquez sustained an injury to his arm which resulted in him

missing the rest of the season. The seriousness of these injuries was partially attributed to the gravel trap. While MotoGP is a dangerous sport and injuries will never be fully avoided, there are ways to mitigate them. Current and ex-riders criticised the current design of the gravel trap as being unnecessarily dangerous, and pointed to the abrasive size and depth of said gravel as potentially being responsible for the severity of the injuries.<sup>[52], [53], [54], [55], [56]</sup> However, changes to the gravel are yet to be made. This raises significant concerns around the Organization's willingness to pay heed to riders' safety concerns.

## **5. POTENTIAL CHANGES**

### **5.1 Following the FIM Concussion Guidelines**

As previously stated, the guidelines were not followed. This is unacceptable, and so in upcoming tests or race weekends the guidelines must be strictly followed. If the CMO or any medical practitioner examining the patient is not sure if the patient suffered concussion, the procedure as stated in Art. 5.2.3.e should be followed<sup>[1]</sup>. If it is concluded that the patient has indeed suffered concussion, no matter the severity, the guidelines should be strictly followed.

### **5.2 Rule Changes**

The onus cannot solely fall to riders to determine when they will continue racing, because they will invariably push themselves or be burdened by the pressures of championship points scoring, or team and sponsor responsibilities.

So, there should be a new rule concerning medical checks before race starts, located in Art. 1.26.<sup>[1]</sup> The rule should state that before riders will restart a race, the CMO or any other qualified medical practitioner will need to assess both the rider's physical and psychological wellbeing and declare them either fit or unfit to race. These medical checks need to be mandatory and cannot be evaded.

### **5.3 Riders Union**

The riders of the MotoGP paddock (and Moto2/3 if they so desire) should form a Riders Union or Commission, where they should meet every race weekend and discuss safety regulations. Participation for MotoGP riders should be mandatory, with exceptions for those who will not be riding at said weekend, or have a suitable reason for their exclusion, such as sickness.

Teams should not be able to prevent riders attending, either directly or indirectly, e.g., by scheduling media activities at the time of said meetings. Currently, riders have pointed to increased media activity as a reason for lower attendance of safety

briefings,<sup>[57]</sup> along with a feeling of not being listened to.<sup>[46]</sup> Riders should be allowed to anonymously raise any concerns in some manner, so as to encourage the sharing of said concerns.

Another way to implement this rule would be for the riders to choose a representative. Riders have already expressed their support for this idea, as mentioned in this article: *“Instead, he (Marini) proposed that riders elect a representative to speak directly with championship organisers on their behalf.”*<sup>[57]</sup>

This representative would then need to follow the rule as previously outlined for MotoGP riders. Were this the case, MotoGP riders should raise their concerns to this representative, who could then present them in meetings and discussions.

These meetings should be led by the CMO or another suitable authority figure independent from the Organization. Relevant information regarding the track should also be imparted.

#### **5.4 MGP Medical Updates Account**

On social media including (but not limited to) X, Threads, Instagram and TikTok, MotoGP should have a separate account dedicated to posting updates on riders who have previously been injured (either in or outside of a race weekend). The updates should concern riders from all classes.

This change should be made because, currently, medical updates regularly get lost between other promotional content and announcements. This leads to confusion and makes it difficult for fans to follow updates on the conditions of riders, which encourages speculation and increases uncertainty and potential misinformation. A dedicated account would increase trust between the Organization and fans, and would not be a significant addition or cost to current media enterprises. This would be a worthwhile endeavour to build trust between fans and the Organization at very little cost and effort.

#### **5.5 Bringing Back Warm Ups**

As previously mentioned, bringing back the Warm Up for both the Moto2 and Moto3 classes would make the sport safer. Riders would not need to use the sighting lap as their Warm Up, and potential technical, mechanical or electronic issues could be noticed and fixed before the race, decreasing the chance of serious crashes and injuries.

## **6. FINAL WORD**

Overall, we are all fans of the sport and want to ensure its continued success, but if things are allowed to continue as we have seen then there are going to be serious repercussions. It no longer becomes a question of 'if', but of 'when?' We accept that risk is a natural feature of any motorsport, but if steps can be taken to minimise chances of injury and reduce harm, they must be taken.

Thank you for taking the time to read over our concerns and proposals, and we hope that meaningful steps can be taken in consultation with riders, teams, and governing bodies to ensure the safety and longevity of the sport.

## 7. SOURCES

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